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BOROUGH OF CHIPPENHAM



REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health

For the Year ended

31st DECEMBER, 1937

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PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS OF THE AUTHORITY.

(a) Medical :—

J. B. Lowe, M.B., Ch.B., D.P.H., who in addition holds the posts of M.O.H. Calne and Chippenham R.D.C., and Deputy C.M.O. Wilts.

(b) Sanitary Inspector :—

S. F. French, Sanitary Inspector's Certificate, Royal Sanitary Institute, and Meat and other Foods Inspector's Certificate, Royal Sanitary Institute.

Report of the Medical Officer of Health

FOR THE YEAR ENDED

31st DECEMBER, 1937.

Gentlemen,

I have the honour to submit my Thirteenth Annual Report on the Public Health of your Borough. The Report follows the directions of Circular 1650 of the Ministry of Health.

A. Statistics and Social Conditions of the Area.

Area (in acres)	..	..	1,197
Population (1937)	..	..	9,805
No. of inhabited houses (end of 1937, according to Rate Books)	..	..	2,932
Rateable Value	..	..	£60,435
Sum represented by penny rate	..	..	£231

The Social conditions are as previously reported.

There is no evidence that unemployment is exercising any significant influence on the health or physique of children or adults.

Employers of nurses and domestic workers both institutional as well as private have continuously throughout the year been offering more vacant posts than could be filled. In addition to the industries of the town there has been work for men available in neighbouring ammunition dumps and aerodromes.

EXTRACTS FROM VITAL STATISTICS FOR 1937 ARE :—

	Total	M	F	
Live Births—Legitimate	149	81	68	{ Birth Rate 15.4
Illegitimate	2	1	1	
Still Births ..	6	4	2	{ Rate per 1000 total births 39
Deaths ..	97	51	46	
Deaths from Puerperal causes :				{ Death Rate 8.1
Puerperal sepsis	0			
Other Puerperal causes	0			
Death Rate of Infants under 1 year :				
All infants per 1000 live births				33.0
Legitimate infants per 1000 legitimate live births				33.5
Illegitimate infants per 1000 illegitimate live births				0.0
Deaths from Measles (all ages)				0.0
,, Whooping Cough (all ages)				0.0
,, Diarrhoea (under 2 years of age)				0.0
Deaths from Influenza	1937	1936	1935	1934 1933
,, Respiratory	8	1	1	0 3
Diseases				
(19, 20, 21)	6	7	5	5 14
,, Diseases of Heart				
and Blood				
Vessels				
(15, 16, 17, 18)	41	36	47	48 32
,, Cancer	11	20	12	19 10

B. General Provision of Health Services in the Area.

LABORATORY FACILITIES are provided at Salisbury Infirmary by the County Council.

During the year 39 specimens of clinical material (swabs, stools, blood, and cerebrospinal fluid) were examined. This is an increase of 27 over those examined last year and the increase is accounted for by the occurrence of cases of puerperal fever, encephalitis and dysentery.

AMBULANCE FACILITIES.

(a) For Infectious Diseases. Chippenham Isolation Hospital garage their own Ambulance adjoining the Hospital premises.

(b) For non-infectious and Accident Cases. The Town Council have their own Ambulance. Application for its use should be made to The Matron, Chippenham and District Hospital, Tel. No. Chippenham 2231.

The ambulance services are adequate for this area and no trouble has been experienced over their co-ordination.

NURSING IN THE HOME.

There have been no changes in these services which are as previously described.

CLINICS AND TREATMENT CENTRES.

Infant Welfare Centre. This is held in the Church Hall at 2 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of the month.

There have been no changes made in the other Treatment Centres and Clinics available for this area.

CANCER CLINICS :—

(a) Trowbridge.—At 11.30 a.m. at The Halve on the 3rd Thursday of the month.

(b) Swindon.—At 11.0 a.m. at the Victoria Hospital on the first Thursday of the month.

These Clinics are initiated and organised by the Public Health Committee of the County Council, and the Swindon Clinic came into operation during the year under review.

Their function is two-fold. In the first place for the selection of new cases suitable for treatment by Radium or Deep x-ray. This treatment is carried out at the Radium Centre at the Bristol General Hospital. In the second place they are the means by which cases which have received this treatment may be followed up and kept under observation by the Radium Officer from Bristol.

HOSPITALS.

This authority is one of those forming the Calne and Chippenham and Malmesbury Joint Isolation Hospital.

During the year preliminary arrangements were discussed for the reception of cases of infectious disease from the aerodrome at Hullavington. It has subsequently transpired, however, that the Air Ministry has made other arrangements. The year once more was a fortunate one for notifiable infectious disease and the capacity of the hospital as now constituted to deal with the enlarged area has not yet really been tested. Under the Ministry of Health's scale of 144 square feet and 12 feet of wall space to each bed there are 27 beds in the hospital.

C. Sanitary Circumstances of the Area.

1. (1) WATER.

4in. coated cast iron pipe mains have been laid to supply new houses as follows :

Spanbourn Avenue	..	..	125 yards
Park Avenue	..	..	150 "
Hardenhuish Avenue	..	..	460 "
Clift Avenue	..	..	125 "

Quality. It was not necessary to take action in respect of any form of contamination.

Below are given the results of analyses made during the year. The bacteriological examination is the first of routine quarterly examinations to be obtained by resolution of the Council passed in December 1937.

Quantity.—The quantity of water available at the sources remains almost constant to that reported last year.

The quantity supplied was increased rapidly in the early months of 1937 by supplies for trade purposes, and later by supplies to Hullavington Royal Air Force Station. The total average daily consumption of the Council's Undertaking is now 500,000 gallons per day.

There is, however, a considerable reserve available in the pumping plant without considering the greater reserve in the yield of the boreholes.

ANALYSIS OF WATER.

CHIPPENHAM WATER SUPPLY.

	<i>Parts per</i>
Sample received July 5th, 1937 ..	100,000
from C. R. Phillips, Borough Surveyor and Water Engineer, Chippenham, Wilts.	

CHEMICAL ANALYSIS

Saline Ammonia .. ..	.0002
Albuminoid Ammonia .. ..	.0006
Nitrogen as Nitrate	Nil.
Nitrites	Absent
Oxygen absorbed from Permanganate in 4 hours at 80°F. .. ..	.008
Chlorine as Chloride	1.8
Dissolved Solids	47.0
Earth Carbonates	27.5
Earthy Salts not Carbonates	6.5
Hardness	35.0
Iron and Poisonous metals	Absent
Sediment	Nil.

Signed HAROLD F. BARKE,
Public Analyst.

34 Park Row, Bristol.

December 20th, 1937.

BACTERIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF WATER.

Sample taken from Rowden Road—High Level Area.
from C. R. Phillips, Borough Surveyor
and Water Engineer, Chippenham.

Sample received on December 14th, 1937.

Organisms on Gelatine at 22°C. ..	0 per c.c.
Organisms liquefying Gelatine ..	0 „ „
Organisms on Agar at 37°C. ..	2 „ „
B. Coli	abs. from 100c.c.
B. Welchii	absent

The water is in good condition, practically sterile,
and free from B. Coli in 100 c.c.

The water is suitable and safe for drinking and Public Supply.

Signed, HAROLD F. BARKE,
Public Analyst.
34 Park Row, Bristol.

(ii) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The following sewer extensions have been made during the past year and constructed as such before the 1st October, 1937 :—

Spanbourn Avenue	125 yards	9in. diameter.
Clift Avenue	125 yards	9in. diameter

Other extensions have been made (since the 1st October, 1937) to the sewerage system, but under the Public Health Act, 1936, these sewers do not become vested in the Authority until taken over by declaration as public sewers.

WESTMEAD SEWAGE WORKS.—

Last year I stated that I was beginning to have doubts concerning the efficiency of these works in producing a satisfactory effluent. In April a very serious slip of the pipe conveying the filter effluent to the irrigation area again took place, and the Council were advised that repairs to this pipe could not be contemplated with hope of success. Since therefore it was impossible to use the irrigation area at all, the Borough Surveyor was instructed to prepare plans for efficient Sewage Works not dependant upon irrigation. This has not proved an easy matter and so far no plans have yet been presented. But it is nevertheless my duty to point out that ever since early last summer a very grave pollution of the river Avon has been taking place by the partly purified effluent discharged from these Works, the effects of which can be noticed as far down as Lacock at least.

PATTERDOWN SEWAGE WORKS.

Conditions here have remained satisfactory and a good effluent has been produced,

2. RIVERS AND STREAMS.—No special action was taken.

3. (1) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Conversion from pail to W.C.'s ..	1
Number of pail Closets remaining ..	14

(ii) PUBLIC CLEANSING.

As a result of complaints received my attention during the summer was again drawn to the tip used by this Council (which is entered from the Bath Road).

In the first place this tip is near to private dwelling houses, and if used at all requires very accurate and complete "control" to prevent nuisance from flies.

In the second place by reason of its depth and the swampy nature of the ground at the bottom, such "control" is very difficult to apply.

Although I recognise that the filling up of this piece of waste and swampy ground is a useful measure and valuable to health in that an area favourable to the breeding of mosquitoes is gradually being replaced by firm earth covered refuse, it is almost impossible to prevent the outside edge of this tip being a litter of paper and the breeding place for house flies during the summer. I therefore should like to take this opportunity of advising that no tipping should take place here from April 1st to 30th September each year during which time the tip surface should be well covered with earth and lie undisturbed.

Three new covered vehicles of 7 cubic yards capacity were put into service during the year. They are horse drawn for collection and can be converted to tractor drawn for hauling the refuse to the tips.

(iii) SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA.

(a) The number and nature of inspections by Sanitary Inspectors.

Housing and Nuisances	548
Overcrowding	82
Meat and Slaughterhouses	1028
Dairies and Cowsheds	18
Bakehouses, Workshops, etc.	24
Common Lodging Houses	8
In connection with Infectious Diseases	58

(b) Informal notices to the number of 135 were served, of these 115 were complied with, 6 were followed up by the statutory notices, and 14 were not complied with. The reason for non-compliance is given on page 14.

(c) Of the 6 statutory notices issued, compliance took place in all cases. Statutory notices were also served on one owner and one occupier to abate overcrowding, and were complied with.

(iv) SHOPS.

There are about 220 shops in the town. An extract of Mr. S. F. French's report made in his capacity as Shops Acts Inspector is as follows :—

Routine inspections and visits are constantly being made in order that the provision of the various Acts and Regulations may be kept before shopkeepers and others concerned.

I have found that shopkeepers generally are closing at or before the Statutory Closing hours. One does, of course, now and then find a shop open when it should be closed.

With regard to the 1934 Act, attention is drawn to the fact that the normal maximum working hours for young persons (*i.e.* under 18 years of age) employed about the business of a shop must not exceed 48 hours. Further, in the case of employment which includes the hours from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. an interval of not less than half-an-hour must be allowed between those hours for tea. I should like particularly to stress these points, as I recently came across a case where a shop assistant under 18 years of age had been working 51 hours each week for 9 weeks. This same assistant had also been employed between the hours of 2 p.m. and 7 p.m. without an interval for tea. Earlier in the year several other instances were found where the normal statutory working hours were being exceeded. In each case the hours were immediately adjusted. One letter was written drawing the attention of the occupier to the fact that sufficient means

had not been provided to maintain a reasonable temperature for the health and comfort of the shop-workers.

The Shops (Sunday Trading Restrictions) Act, 1936, came into operation on the First May. This defines the transactions for the purposes of which a shop may be open for the serving of customers on Sundays. It also provides for compensatory holidays to be given to any person employed on a Sunday about the business of a shop. In August I found that these holidays were not being given to employees in a garage. A circular letter was sent to those traders known to be employing assistants on Sundays (principally garages) giving particulars of the Act in this respect.

The attention of the public is drawn to the fact that after February 1st next Dairymen will be unable to continue the practice of supplying butter and eggs on Sundays.

Very few complaints are now being received either of shops being kept open after the statutory closing hours or of assistants working more than the 48 hours in one week.

I have endeavoured to make known the provisions of the Acts to prevent the committing of offences rather than to be continuously on the lookout for offences when committed. I find this method does much to encourage reciprocation by shopkeepers.

(v) SMOKE ABATEMENT.

No complaints were received concerning the chimney referred to in my last report, and observations showed that matters this year had been considerably improved.

(vi) No new swimming baths or pools open to the public have been constructed.

(vii) ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

Four houses, none of them Council houses, were found to be infested and were treated by fumigation by Cimex in three, and spraying with Zaldecide in the other.

In one case the occupants were moved to a Council house prior to which the furniture and bedding were treated with Cimex and steam respectively.

D. Housing.

There is still a marked shortage of houses. I frequently receive requests for assistance in obtaining houses, which, of course, I am unable to give.

New Houses built by the Council	0
New Houses built by private enterprise	149

1. INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR.

(1) (a)	Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts) ..	258
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	564
(2) (a)	Number of dwelling houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925	208
(b)	Number of inspections made for the purpose	422
(3)	Number of dwelling houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation	0
(4)	Number of dwelling houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	96

2. REMEDY OF DEFECTS DURING THE YEAR WITHOUT SERVICE OF FORMAL NOTICES:—

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their officers	77
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3. ACTION UNDER STATUTORY POWERS DURING THE YEAR.

- (a) Proceedings under sections 9, 10, and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936.
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs 2
 - (2) Number of dwelling houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices :—
 - (a) By Owners 2
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of owners 0
- (b) Proceedings under Public Health Acts :
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 3
 - (2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices :—
 - (a) By owners 3
 - (b) By Local Authority in default of owners 0
- (c) Proceedings under sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936.
- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made nil
 - (2) Number of dwelling houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders .. 12
- (d) Proceedings under section 12 of the Housing Act, 1936 :
- (1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made nil
 - (2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit nil

4. HOUSING ACT, 1936.—PART IV.

OVERCROWDING :

(a) (i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	19
(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein	19
(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein	142
(b)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c) (1)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	10
(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	75
(d)	Particulars of any cases in which dwelling houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding	nil.

Extent of overcrowding at end of year :—

By $\frac{1}{2}$ unit	6 houses.
By 1 unit	6 houses.
By $1\frac{1}{2}$ units.	2 houses.
By 2 units.	5 houses.

	19
In Council Houses	14
Other Houses	5

CLASSIFIED STATEMENT OF DEFECTS AND NUISANCES
DISCOVERED.

	Recorded	Remedied
Damp Walls	21	21
Provision of wash-up sinks	12	12
Defective yard paving	20	17
Defective floors	8	7
Defective roofs	9	9
Dangerous walls	1	1
Defective walls and ceilings	15	14
Conversion of pail closets to water closets	1	1
Insufficient Sanitary Accommodation —	—	—

DEFECTS & NUISANCES— <i>continued</i>	Recorded	Remedied
Provision of flushing apparatus ..	10	10
Defective water closets ..	17	16
Absence proper drainage ..	—	—
Defective and choked drains ..	30	30
Dirty Houses ..	4	4
Defective gutters and stackpipes ..	11	7
Insufficient lighting and ventilation	16	10
Insufficient water supply ..	3	3
Other nuisances ..	8	8
Lodging Houses ..	—	—
Cowsheds and dairies ..	1	1
Bakehouses ..	8	8
Slaughter houses ..	1	1
	<hr/> 196	<hr/> 180

The defects given above which have not been remedied by the end of the year are to be found in 14 different houses. In all of these the orders had been placed, but the work had not been completed by the end of the year.

Since the Housing Act 1930 has been in operation 58 houses have been dealt with and of these 54 houses have been demolished.

E. Inspection and Supervision of Food.

(a) MILK SUPPLY

Some 18 inspections of dairies and cowsheds were made and 3 informal notices were served. All were complied with.

Number of wholesalers ..	2
Number of cowkeepers ..	3
Number of retailers ..	17

Of the retailers 8 have their premises outside the borough.

Two retailers are licensed to sell grade A (T.T.) and another pasteurised milk.

(b) MEAT.

Meat inspection has been carried out regularly throughout the year and nearly all beasts killed in the slaughterhouses were fully examined. The meat stalls in the Market have been subject to regular inspection.

During the year 1028 inspections were made.
Meat condemned :—

		T.	C.	Q.	L.
Bovines—13 carcasses	..	3	12	0	26
10 forequarters			13	1	5
1 hindquarter			1	1	10
48 heads	..		12	3	15
55 livers	..		5	3	16
Other organs & offal	1	1	0	8	
1 Calf carcass			1	2	
Pigs—283 carcasses	..	19	13	3	21
3380 heads	..	22	7	2	5
Meat	..	1	19	3	4
Offal	..	27	3	1	7
Sheep—15 carcasses	..		5	2	0
Offal	..			3	8
		77	17	3	15

These figures approximate closely to those of last year.

Since over 30,000 animals are killed for food annually it is not possible for the Sanitary Inspector to inspect personally every carcass. It has been possible, however, to arrange with certain of the larger firms, about whose co-operation this department has felt no doubt, for all carcasses which to an experienced dresser did not appear normal to be set aside for inspection. The figures given in the table below are evidence of this co-operation, and show that the Sanitary Inspector is able to gain access to all carcasses of a doubtful nature.

	Cattle including Cows	Calves	Sheep and Lambs	Pigs
Number killed (if known) ...	769	145	2536	29287
Number Inspected ...	711	28	405	29130
<i>All diseases except Tuberculosis</i>				
Whole Carcases condemned ...	4	1	15	53
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	41		24	3940
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with disease other than tuberculosis ...	6.32	3.57	9.62	13.7
<i>Tuberculosis only.</i>				
Whole carcasses condemned	9			230
Carcases of which some part or organ was condemned ...	87			5187
Percentage of the number in- spected affected with tuber- culosis ...	13.5			18.59

Prevalence of, and Control over Infectious Diseases.

Infectious diseases fall into several groups, which it may be of interest to define.

Group (1) Contains smallpox, cholera, diphtheria, membranous croup, erysipelas, the disease known as scarlatina or scarlet fever, and the fevers known by any of the following names, typhus, typhoid, enteric or relapsing, and includes, as respects any particular district, any infectious disease to which Part v. of the Public Health Act, 1936, has been applied by the local authority.

(In this district, however, no additional diseases have been so included by the Council.)

This group of diseases is defined by the Public Health Act, 1936, as "notifiable" diseases, and is subject to the penalty clauses of Part v. of the Act. It is to be observed that, while "notifiable" diseases must be notified to the Medical Officer of Health, there are other infectious diseases not in the group defined by the Act as "notifiable," which nevertheless have to be notified.

Group (2) Includes cerebro-spinal fever and acute poliomyelitis, acute polio-encephalitis and acute encephalitis lethargica, malaria, dysentery, acute primary pneumonia, acute influenzal pneumonia and

puerperal pyrexia. These diseases although not falling within the "notifiable" group given above yet require notification to the Medical Officer of Health. The legal requirements of this group are set out in a series of Public Health Regulations originally made by the Ministry of Health empowered by Sec. 130 of the Public Health Act of 1875, the functions of which section have now been replaced by section 143 of the Public Health Act of 1936.

Group (3) Contains only ophthalmia neonatorum. This disease must be notified by the practitioner in charge to the County Medical Officer and *not* to the Medical Officer of Health of this district.

Group (4) "Infectious Disease" mentioned in the Public Health Act 1936 is not defined and into this group presumably fall measles, mumps, whooping cough, german measles, and chickenpox.

It should be noted that "primary pneumonia" means any pneumonia which is not secondary and includes primary broncho-pneumonia as well as lobar pneumonia, that "puerperal fever" has ceased to exist and that the cases formerly notified as this disease should be included under the term puerperal pyrexia, while the expression "continued fever" has vanished altogether.

The more serious infectious diseases have again remained well under control. There were eleven mild cases of Scarlet Fever, scattered fairly evenly throughout the year, and only two of Diphtheria. The Diphtheria rate has been so favourable for some time past that one feels there must be a large number of susceptible children in the town. This would seem to suggest that extensive immunization should be offered, but experience for the most part shows that unless there is fear of an epidemic acceptances are not sufficient to make such a course justifiable.

Pneumonia responsible for eleven notifications shows some increase. It may again be emphasised that the notifiable varieties are any primary pneumonia, whether lobar or broncho-pneumonia and influenzal pneumonia.

Influenza made an epidemic appearance in the first quarter of the year, and all the schools had to be closed on its account. In the same term there occurred a few cases of mumps, and at the end of the year a few cases of chickenpox appeared.

**NOTIFIABLE DISEASES (OTHER THAN TUBERCULOSIS)
DURING THE YEAR 1937.**

Disease	Total Cases notified	Cases Admitted to Hospital	Total Deaths
Smallpox	0	0	0
Scarlet Fever	11	11	0
Diphtheria	2	2	0
Puerperal Pyrexia	7	5	0
Puerperal Fever	0	0	0
Pneumonia	11	8	1
Erysipelas	1	1	0

TUBERCULOSIS.

NEW CASES AND MORTALITY DURING 1937.

New Cases				Deaths.			
Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary		Pulmonary		Non-Pulmonary	
M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.	M.	F.
2	3	1	2	5	0	0	1

Public Health (Prevention of Tuberculosis) Regulations 1925. No tuberculous persons to my knowledge were employed in the milk trade.

It has not been considered advisable to exercise the powers given under Section 62 Public Health Act, 1925, or Section 172 Public Health Act, 1936, for the removal to hospital or sanatorium of tuberculous persons.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient servant,

JOHN B. LOWE,
Medical Officer of Health.

